

Bedford ceremonies mark 75th anniversary of D-Day

Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen greeted World War II veterans and acted as military escorts during a roll call honoring their service at the observation of the 75th anniversary of D-Day June 6, 2019, at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia. VNG Soldiers assigned to the Troutville-based 29th Infantry Division Band performed ceremonial music, and members of the Virginia Defense Force volunteered their time to assist local law enforcement with traffic flow, parking and pre-security checks before the event.

More than 100 World War II veterans, including more than 40 who participated in the invasion of Normandy June 6, 1944, were in attendance among the thousands who came to the Memorial.

"Today was a pretty huge honor walking him over the memorial bridge," said Sgt. Michael Wilcox, who escorted D-Day veteran Ubert McConnell. "It really hit me, seeing him look out over the beachhead monuments. I was just amazed by who I was accompanying and what he must have gone through and just wondering what he was thinking in that moment. I'll never forget that."

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/06/07/13563/>



Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen greet World War II veterans June 6, 2019, at the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of D-Day at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Volunteers recognized at annual training workshop

Brig. Gen. James W. Ring, the Virginia National Guard Director of the Joint Staff, honored dozens of VNG volunteers at the 2019 Virginia National Guard State Volunteer Recognition and Training Workshop June 9, 2019, in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/06/10/13588/>

Secretary Hopkins visits Winchester STARBASE Academy

Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Carlos Hopkins visited students taking part in activities at the Winchester STARBASE Academy May 20, 2019, in Winchester, Virginia.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/05/29/13583/>

VDF trains on communications skills, supports D-Day ceremony in Bedford

Members of the Virginia Defense Force took part in the United Resolve communications exercise June 1, 2019, and they assisted local law enforcement at the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of D-Day June 6 in Bedford, Virginia.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/06/08/13611/>

Army National Guard offering six-year \$20,000 re-enlistment bonus

Virginia National Guard Soldiers with an ETS date before Sept. 30, 2019, who have not re-enlisted are eligible for a \$20,000 bonus. The Army National Guard will offer a six-year \$20,000 re-enlistment bonus lump sum option.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/06/06/13608/>

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29th ID Band plays integral role in D-Day anniversary events

Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Troutville-based 29th Infantry Division Band performed ceremonial music, playing an integral part of ceremonies commemorating the 75th anniversary of D-Day June 6, 2019, at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia. The band also performed at other anniversary events throughout the week as the Bedford community remembered the Soldiers who participated in and those who were lost during the invasion of the beaches of Normandy in 1944.

The 29th ID band performs at all types of ceremonies and events throughout the year, but the D-Day anniversary events have special meaning, according to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Donald Carlson, the band's commander.

"We honor all military on all of our missions, however this mission is particularly important to me because we had band members who were a part of the invasion," explained Carlson. "The 29th Infantry Division Band went ashore D-Day plus three. The 80 soldiers of that band served as litter bearers and assisted in mortuary affairs for a few days and then moved out as two 40-member bands to entertain the combat troops."

During the main ceremony at the memorial, the band played ceremonial music throughout, to include playing honors for Vice President Mike Pence, who provided the keynote address.

"Each mission that the band plays for is different," said Sgt. Danielle Feinstein, who plays flute. "Playing for the 75th anniversary of D-Day was amazing. Not only did we play to honor those veterans who served, but we also played for the vice president of the United States and that was quite an honor."

The band also supplied the color guard and fife and drum performances during the ceremony, which brought the band a little closer to the audience and more than 100 World War II veterans they were there to honor.

"It is always such an honor to use our skills to celebrate those who have fought to preserve our ability to perform," said Staff Sgt. Charla Owens, flute and fife player. "As part of the fife and drum, we were able to mingle and talk with some of the attendees. It was amazing to hear their stories and learn of their experiences."

One of the more memorable moments of the performance was at the conclusion, when Sgt. Brian Campbell performed a solo version of Taps while aircraft performed a "missing man" formation during a flyover. Campbell did not take the opportunity lightly.

"One of the biggest challenges of playing Taps is showing the confidence behind each note that all these veterans put forth so many years ago," said Campbell. "After being in the National Guard now for 15 years, this was the biggest and most meaningful event that I've had the honor of playing in the entirety of my service. Giving back to all of the veterans that were there on D-Day, past and present, is a true honor."

Campbell's bandmates thought he performed brilliantly.

"I was nervous for him, and speaking with him later, he was beyond nervous. Taps is one of the few songs that a military musician absolutely must play perfectly," said Spc. Joshua Cole,



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who plays tuba.

According to Carlson, the Soldiers of the 29th Infantry Division Band perform an average of 45 missions per year, half of which are community support events. Unlike the other half of their missions, these are performed for civilian audiences, many of whom have limited knowledge about the Virginia National Guard. At the end of every concert, attendees are encouraged to talk with Soldiers to learn more about their mission, the Virginia National Guard and the military in general.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/06/11/13575/>

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